



A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES AT **AMIGA FORMAT**

Backstage

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER - FOR SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

Three Amigas!



For the first time in our chequered histories, Future's three Amiga mags are working together to ensure that there's no better place to get all your Amiga information.

GOD! THE OFFICE is a mess. Not the standard *Amiga Format* office chaos but a whole new type of disorder. In short, a moving office type of mess.

There's nothing we hate more than moving office, but because Future Publishing is an expanding company, it's inevitable. Back in 1990, we were up on the third floor. Then we moved down to the first story of the premises next door. (It's OK, we own that building, too.) But because that office had a balcony our publisher, who has an eye for a good thing, soon seized it and we were forced into two cupboards near the car park. This satisfied my Tamiya remote control car habit, but was a drag otherwise.

Then, under the command of ex-editor Damien Noonan, the rampaging *AF* hordes took control of the entire second floor of Future's headquarters. Now we're being forced to give up some of our vast expanse to two more magazines.

But this time there's a silver lining to the cloud - it did get a bit lonely up here: sometimes the only people we saw for weeks were the telephone hygienists and the man who re-filled the drinks machine. And the two

magazines that are moving up to share our floor are none other than our sister titles *Amiga Shopper* and *Amiga Power*.

It's three years since our siblings were formed, and those three years have been ones of mixed relations. On occasion we have looked on our little sisters with fondness, while at others, we've tried to pretend we weren't related. But now, we've decided that by pooling our resources, while maintaining our fierce editorial independence, we can offer you, the readers, a much better service.

Many of you also buy *Amiga Shopper* and *Amiga Power* as an ancillary purchase. So, starting with this issue...

♥ The incredible investigative powers of Future's Amiga journalists will ensure that no story is left uncovered (if you don't read it in one of our mags, it isn't true);

♥ The combined minds of our fine reviewers will ensure that you get the most definitive, most informed and most accurate reviews;

♥ And the massed brain power of our game-busting and technical experts will make sure we solve all your Amiga problems.

Two heads are better than one, and three Amiga mags are best of all.

**ISSUE FIFTY-EIGHT
April '94**

What I do!

Frank Bartucca - Designer



In this part of *Backstage*, we take a look at the *Amiga Format* team, the people who make the mag what it is today.

Last month, Steve Bradley told us about life as a games reviewer, this time it's the turn of Frank Bartucca, *AF*'s designer.

In your own time Frank...

As designer on the *AF* team, most of my time is spent laying out pages. That doesn't mean that I punch them until they fall to the ground dazed and bruised. No, it means that I put the pictures on the pages and try to make them look pretty and interesting... A

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

It's a Steal!

Get Virgin's superb Beneath A Steel Sky, and save an extra £5 in our special subscriber offer.

An *AF* Gold Game that scored a massive 94 per cent in *Amiga Format* issue 57 can be yours for only £24.99, a massive £10 off the list price, and a further reduction of £5 on *Amiga Format*'s own special offer price.

Just flip the page, and fill in the form overleaf to get in on this superb deal!



Don't miss out on our sensational Beneath A Steel Sky offer.

bit like me really. I work on an Apple Macintosh, (Boo! Hiss!) in a program called *QuarkXPress*. I would much prefer to work on an Amiga, but the whole company is set up to run on Apple computers. The game 'grabs' are taken using a Mac set-up, then put through a program that converts them from MS-DOS to Mac-DOS, so the Mac can read them. Simple... Again, a bit like me, really.

Now this may sound like an easy job, but in actual fact it takes several years' of intensive training to reach the standard of excellence that I am at now. For instance, the first time I joined the team (this being my third outing, y'know) I had to prove my worth by drinking a lot of very, very strong lager with Marcus. After consuming an unimaginable amount of the stuff I ended up under the table. Unfortunately we were in the office at the time and our antics caused just a little damage to a few doors and a filing cabinet.

Nowadays, though, I find myself having to organise and direct photo-shoots, and liaise with the in-house pre-press and production people. Most of the images that appear in the mag are computer-generated, but occasionally I'll do some dodgy illustrations in *PhotoShop*, (a program which is similar to *Art Department Professional*) to visualise what the writers are trying to convey.

But, by far the most important part of my job, is keeping up morale, and generally entertaining the troops. Every office needs a clown and I've always wanted to live in the Circus. As indeed I do, the famous oval of Bath that appears on all the postcards, no less. My comic repertoire is vast - I can do anything as long as it's by Harry Enfield.

Oh, and may I take this opportunity to commend, nay, to pay homage to, that comic genius Will Hay. Sadly, a man highly under-rated and all too often forgotten.

Next month, Steve Carey, AF's new publisher will reveal the mysteries of his job.

CD for the common man

I'VE JUST FINISHED playing *Microcosm*, and it is bloody fantastic. It really is what this CD lark is all about. Loads and loads of superb animations, great music, (I retract everything I ever said about Rick Wakeman: he's not a tedious old hippy, he's an intelligent, witty, talented geezer capable of writing some banging tunes), and pretty good gameplay to boot.

With *Microcosm* Pygnosis have proven that the Amiga is capable of things that the SNES (don't even mention the Mega Drive) can't begin to dream about.

The one fly in the ointment is that all that data is heavily compressed to squeeze it on to 660Mb. Yes, you did read that correctly, *Microcosm* has more than 660 megabytes of graphics, sound and game code.

It is the first truly CD game. Most other CD releases are just enhanced A1200 games with CD quality sound. Nothing wrong with that in itself, but *Microcosm* is a whole new ball (if you'll excuse the mixed metaphor) game. Which means that, at present, the only Amiga users who can play it are CD³ owners.

Sure, in a couple of months, A4000 owners will be part of the Amiga CD-using community. But so far, Commodore have remained firmly non-committal about if and when we are going to see the development of an A1200 CD Drive.

"Pygnosis have proven that the Amiga CD" is capable of things that the SNES (don't even mention the Mega Drive) can't even begin to dream about."

This is not good enough. I know that it may be a simple fact of insurmountable technical problems that force them to leave the A1200 CD-less. But that won't do. We Amiga owners are a fiercely loyal bunch of guys (and some girls too). We put up with overpriced computers; we tolerate poor specifications; we accept after-sales service which can only be described as unacceptable, and stay faithful while consoles are effectively marketed in the high street electrical multiples while the Amiga sits unattended and unloved nearby.

But we can only be pushed so far. CD is a revolution in computer data storage. It will

open up new doors, bring better quality games, deliver interactive edutainment - but only to owners who have CD drives. The A1200 is the best value computer in the world today (my earlier comments were aimed specifically at the A4000), but it will be a relic before its time if it does not get a CD drive soon.

Previously faithful Amiga owners will wander off to other, less exciting, less individual formats, because they don't want to be left out of the revolution that is CD.

So come on Commodore, you've let us down before, and we forgive you, but this time, deliver. An A1200 CD drive will establish the CD standard to the extent that potential challengers will have a hell of a job. ☺

Spong!

Cause for celebration and carousing: *Amiga Format's* Bulletin Board is now up and running. The slight delay was due to there being no-one in the office to sign for the 1Gb hard drive that Software Demon are kindly donating to the project, so the courier took it away again. However...

Because Richard Beguley is busy mastering the Amiga CD³ Coverdisk (as well as working on *Amiga Format's* the board doesn't contain all the files, news and feedback that it will. But we'll be working on it over the coming month to make it a valuable store of support files and info for AF readers. It's completely free, and there's a whole load of Public Domain programs on there for you to pull down. So if you're a modem owner, the number you need is : 0225 311647.

Just what is all this Backstage stuff about?

Backstage is the part of the magazine (All right, so it's a separate bit) especially for subscribers. It's a way of thanking you for committing yourselves to the magazine for a whole year at a time. It's a place to discuss things, a place to tell you things that the other readers are denied, more for lack of space than anything else. It's a place to get to know the team, and to get to find out what's going on behind the scenes here at Future Publishing. So, if there's anything you want to see in *Backstage* let us know. Write to: *Backstage, Amiga Format*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.

Subscribers' special Steel Sky offer

Please send me a copy of Virgin's stunning *Beneath a Steel Sky* at the special subscriber-only price of £24.99. (A not-to-be-sneezed-at saving of £10 on the RRP.)

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Subscriber Superdisk

Issue 58 • April 1994

Richard Baguley presents another Subscribers' Superdisk packed with the finest Public Domain and Shareware programs

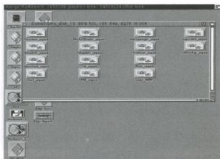
GETTING STARTED

This disk is not bootable, so to access the programs you'll need to boot up your machine using your normal Workbench disk. To pack on a large number of files, we've compressed them using Stefan Boberg's LHA program. But don't panic, to decompress them, all you need do is to click on the appropriate icon. This will start off a script which will decompress the programs and files to the RAM disk. You can then run them from here, or copy them on to another disk.

1942 DRIVERS*

The monitor drivers included with Workbench 3 don't get the best out of the new 1940 and 1942 monitors. In particular, you can't get the full overscan width.

Included in this issue are several new monitor drivers written by Commodore to get around these limitations. These can be installed by simply double-clicking on the 1942 Setup icon. This will copy the new les into the appropriate directories on your Workbench disk, whether it's a floppy or hard drive. You should also check the Read.me file for details of how to correctly centre the display on your monitor.



This looks like a real floppy disk, but it is, shock horror, a fake created with the FMS Disk program.

FMS DISK

FMS is a file-based trackdisk simulator, which means that you can create a file on your hard disk which appears to be a floppy disk. This may sound a bizarre thing to do, but it is incredibly useful if you are trying to create your own PD disks, because they are a lot easier to work with than a pile of oppies.

Once you've completed your disk you can copy this straight to a floppy. FMS can cope with non-DOS disks, so you could even copy things such as PD demos on to your hard disk.

It's very easy to install, with only a couple of files to be copied and a small addition to the mountlist file. Check the documentation for full details of how to install this program.

TOULOUSE LAUTREC FONT

Vincent Van Gogh
Spilt my pint

The writing is on the wall, or at least on the blackboard behind the bar along with Today's Specials. Trouble is Vincent hasn't been seen for a while. Must have left 'earlier.

Toulouse Lautrec is an excellent 1920s French-style font. This doesn't mean that it has berets instead of dots, or that it has strings of onions draped around its gallic descenders, but that it is the type style used on those classic posters for the Moulin Rouge. Before it was a font Toulouse Lautrec used to be a little salacious bloke who painted dancers, strippers and prostitutes down the Moulin Rouge of a Saturday evening.

After his death he became famous, as is the case with so many French people, but surprisingly enough his art is slightly less famous than the enormous phallus fallacy. It certainly evokes a period feeling, but absinthe and dancing girls are not included. Installing this font is straightforward:

1 Decompress the font files from the Subscribers' Superdisk by double-clicking on the Font Unpack icon. This will decompress the files to your RAM disk.

2 Run the Fountain (or Intellifont if you are using Workbench 3) program that is in your system directory.

3 Click on the gadget to the right of the screen under Outline font source and

select RAM: from the list of volumes. Click on OK, and, after a bit of disk activity, the Toulouse Lautrec font will appear in the Source Typefaces list.

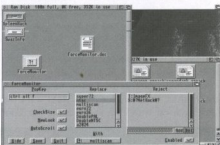
4 Click once on any or all three of the fonts in this list and then on Install Marked Typeface. After a couple of disk swaps, if you're booting from floppy, the font should appear on the list of installed typefaces on the right. Yes? You have just installed the font!

Reboot the machine, and any program which uses Compugraphic fonts (such as DPaint) should now be able to use this font. If you are running on Workbench 2, you may experience some problems in installing Compugraphic fonts. This is due to bugs in the AmigaDOS library. Fortunately, Commodore have supplied you with a fixed version of this library which you can install by typing the following line in the Shell:

```
COPY AMIGADOS2.0:LIBS/DSIFONT.LIBRARY  
LIBS:
```

Then insert the required disks when requested. This will copy the fixed version of the library to your Libs Directory. If you now reboot the Amiga you should be able to install Compugraphic fonts without any problems.

FORCEMONITOR*



Forcemonitor could be the answer to your prayers if you find the VGAOnly program sadly lacking.

If you are restricted to using a VGAOnly monitor, then you will long ago have given up cursing at Commodore's pathetic VGAOnly monitor patch. This utility will alleviate your problems. For a start it is a commodity, so it can be called up at any time via a hotkey or with the Exchange program.

What's more, it can be configured to open specific screens depending on what application is being run. On the whole it is a lot more effective and successful than VGAOnly, and is a darn sight easier to use.

To run this program simply drag it into your WBSStartup drawer. Edit the tooltypes if you don't want the window to appear.

PHOTOCDDLDR

Many of you will have read the March AF feature on Photo CD, which gives you photographs on a Compact Disc. This program allows you to load Photo CD images directly into GVP's popular image processing program ImageFX.

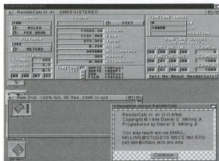
It's very simple to use — you just drag the file called PCD into the Loader's directory of your ImageFX program. Now you can load Photo CD files simply by loading the file into ImageFX. You can also choose at what resolu-



With a copy of *ImageFX* and *Photo CD Loader* you too can have beautiful images such as this.

tion you load the image, because the images are stored at five different resolutions, ranging from 192 x 128 to 3072 x 2048. Once you've loaded the file, you can save it in any of the image formats supported by *ImageFX* for use in a DTP or graphics program.

RENDERCALC*



If you want to calculate how far a car travels in a given number of seconds, *RenderCalc* is for you.

RenderCalc is a desktop calculator for dealing with animations and film. It is also useful for converting distances from one measurement to another. For instance, you could work out how far a car travelling at 100 miles per hour

will travel in 30 seconds, and get the result in metres. This is the sort of calculation that *RenderCalc* does with one hand tied behind its back. Just enter the figures and the program will calculate the distance for you.

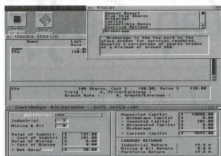
SUPERDARK*

If you leave your Amiga on for long periods of time (such as when you are rendering an image in *Imagine*), there is an outside possibility that the image on your screen may be burnt into the phosphorus. However, this problem can be solved by using a screen-blanker such as *SuperDark*.

If you leave your Amiga unattended, *SuperDark* will clear the screen and start off one of a number of modules which do weird things to the screen. These range from 'melting' the screen to playing animations with little dancing figures.

Not only are such utilities amusing, but they can also help protect your screen. They do take a certain amount of processing power away from any other programs that may be running (for example your *Imagine* renders will be slightly slower), but it's a fairly minimal amount. Installation is merely a question of dragging the *SuperDark* icon into your WBStartup drawer and dragging the other files into a drawer called *SuperDark*. Check the *AmigaGuide* documentation for further details.

SHARE MANAGER



Follow the progress of your fortunes and your shares with the *Share Manager* program.

Many people try to make money by buying and selling shares, but you won't get very far unless you've got a good idea of how your shares are doing.

Share Manager is designed to allow you to keep track of your shares, and to quickly see what is going up and what is going down. All you need to do is to regularly enter information on the current selling price of the shares you hold, and this program will generate a graph to aid you in your purchasing and selling decisions.

The program is fairly complex, but most of the technical terms are fully explained in the on-line help for the program, so if you don't know a blue chip from a convertible note, don't worry, *ShareManager* will explain it. However, don't forget that the value of stocks and shares can go down as well as up, and it's not our fault if all of your shares turn out to be worthless pieces of paper.

SPLEENHACK

If having a fractal fern Workbench sounds like fun, this program could give you hours of merriment. It is of absolutely no practical use, but it is quite fun nonetheless. Anyway, what it does is to draw a fractal fern on your

Workbench. Two versions are included one for standard and one for accelerated Amigas. Useful? No, but quite pretty...

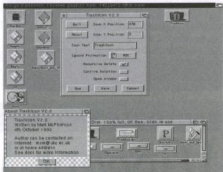
SWAZIINFO*

The standard Workbench information requester is hardly the most friendly thing in the world, so New Zealander David Swasbrook decided to write his own.

Swaziinfo is not only easier to use, but it also supports ARexx and drag and drop tooltypes. This means that if you want to add a tooltip to an icon, you can do so by dragging the icon over the information screen and dropping it on to the tooltips section.

The *Swaziinfo* program also provides support for Geert Utterhoeven's multi-user file system, which enables you to set up several different users who can't delete each other's files, for one machine.

TRASHICON*



Trashicon is very configurable, so you can set it to confirm that you really want files deleted.

The Amiga's trashcan has never been widely used, because, frankly, it isn't very good. What would be much more useful would be a trashcan which appeared on the desktop and instantly deleted any files which you dropped into it.

Spookily enough, this program fulfils this very purpose. It's designed to work as a commodity, so to get it running all you need to do is to copy the *Trashicon* icon into your WBStartup drawer. Next time you reboot, a new icon called *Trashicon* will appear.

Any files dropped on to this will be deleted, unless they are protected from deletion, in which case you will be asked whether you really want to dispatch them to that great dark void from where they cannot be retrieved, except it doesn't quite put it like that. Double-clicking on the *Trashicon* file brings up another screen where you can set the various options for the program.

*Workbench 2 or above only

If you have any suggestions, comments or programs that you would like to see on the *Subscribers' Superdisk*, please write to:

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Or try the E-mail addresses:
2:250/107.95(Fidonet)
AMFORMAT@CIX.COMPULINK.CO.UK
(Internet, Janet)

YAK*

There are certainly no shortage of Workbench commodities designed for one specific purpose, but there are only a few which will add a range of functions. *Yak* (short for *Yet Another Kommodity*) does just this and includes the following:

AUTOPOINT: Windows are automatically selected when the mouse stops over them.

AUTOPOP: Automatically brings windows to the front.

HOTKEYS: Carry out actions with only a couple of key presses.

KEYCLICK: Keys click when pressed.

NOCLICK: Stops disk drives clicking.

This combines the action of several other commodities, but only uses 29K of memory.

There are two archives on the disk, *Yak* and *Yak Update*. The first is the full release of version 1.56 of the program, while *Yak Update* contains the files necessary to upgrade this to version 1.57.

Both have installation programs, so just start the appropriate program from the Installation drawer to load *Yak* on to your Workbench disk.